



# THE RESPONDER

TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE • GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER  
OIL SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAM • JULY 2015



## The Importance of Keeping Your Spill Kits Stocked and Ready—

**O**n a Friday afternoon in February, the GLO Region 4 office received a call from a concerned citizen regarding a strong fuel odor and sheen from an unknown source at Sea Ranch Marina on South Padre Island. Region 4 personnel Raymond Oliveira, Gonzalo Pena and Corey Mock prepared their spill response gear and responded to investigate. Once they arrived at the marina and ensured all was safe, a thorough check was conducted, resulting in the discovery of a 35-gallon pocket of fresh red-dye diesel. The red-dye diesel was moving between the many recreational vessels moored at the docks. GLO responders obtained statements from witnesses on scene.



Response Officer Gonzalo Pena oversees cleanup operations at Sea Ranch Marina.

With assistance from marina staff, GLO personnel were able to safely and quickly deploy absorbent pads and boom kept on-site to prevent impact to nearby sensitive mangroves and vegetation, and prevent diesel from escaping the marina. After four hours of cleanup and a thorough spill investigation, the GLO was able to locate the leaking vessel and make contact with the responsible party, who in turn, assumed all costs associated with the cleanup operations.

This spill is an example of why scupper plugs and spill kits are

vital for prevention and quick response in our sheltered marinas and harbors. These locations are where accidental fuel spills are common and could persist for days if left unabated. As part of the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program, the GLO visits marinas and fuel docks frequently to ensure spill kits are stocked and in working condition.

Although the Sea Ranch Marina spill would not be considered a large spill event, discharges such as these are still harmful to aquatic and marine life.

Thanks to a firehouse response by the GLO with assistance from Sea Ranch Marina personnel, spill absorbents were deployed effectively and the fuel was recovered before a busy weekend of vessels entering and departing the marina.

Just a reminder: With summer upon us and recreational vessel traffic on the rise, please report all spills to 1-800-832-8224 so they can be dealt with efficiently, minimizing impact to our sensitive coastal habitat.



Response Officer Corey Mock and a Sea Ranch representative work to contain and cleanup the red-dye diesel.

## STCZAC 2015 Meeting Held at the Port of Brownsville

**R**ecently, personnel from Regions 3 and 4 of the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division, along with U.S. Coast Guard Sector Corpus Christi personnel, updated industry, local officials and the public about important issues and potential impacts along the South Texas coast. Topics discussed were the latest undertakings in safety, security and environmental spill prevention at the Port of Brownsville. South Texas presenters from Texas A&M University, the USCG and GLO conducted highly informative presentations on the latest developments regarding these issues. Upon conclusion of the presentations, a group discussion and Q&A session were held. One of the highlights was the retirement announcement of Captain Samuel Creech, Commanding Officer of USCG Sector Corpus Christi, who has served his country admirably and will be greatly missed. The GLO had an excellent working relationship with Captain Creech for numerous

years and wishes him the best.



GLO personnel and USCG Captain Samuel Creech at the South Texas Coastal Zone Area Committee "STCZAC" meeting. L to R: Jay Veselka (Region 3), Raymond Oliveira (Region 4), Captain Creech, USCG Sector Corpus Christi, Jimmy A. Martinez (Region 3), Demetrius Moreno (GLO South Texas Government Relations) and Gonzalo Pena (Region 4).

EDUCATE ♦ PREVENT ♦ RESPOND

# Pipeline Leak Results in Challenging Response

On January 7, 2015 at approximately 3:00 p.m., the Texas General Land Office Region 1 field office was notified by U.S. Coast Guard MSU Port Arthur of a sheen sighting about ¼ mile off the beach in the Gulf of Mexico. The sheen sighting was approximately 23 miles west of the Sabine Pass jetties near the former BP shore facility. After investigating, it was discovered there was only one pipeline in the area of the spill.

On January 8 the GLO and USCG responded to the sheen location via a Region 1 UTV to assess the area. No sheen could be seen, but there was a faint petroleum odor present. After some discussion between the USCG and GLO, and no response from the suspected owner of the pipeline, the decision was made to federalize the incident and determine the exact origin and cause of the spill.

On January 14, the USCG, GLO and T&T Marine met in Sabine Pass and traveled to the spill location. The GLO Region 1 office used its two UTVs to transit to the spill site while the contractor used its response vehicles. Just a few minutes into the transit, one of the contractor vehicles became stuck in the mud. This remote section of beach could only be reached by UTV and light four-



GLO personnel provide support for the USCG and a dive team working to stop the pipeline leak near a remote stretch of beach in Jefferson County.

wheel drive trucks. Subsequently, a decision was made not to go any further with anything but UTVs.

The Region 1 office continued on with the contract divers to assess the area and see if any other supplies might be needed for the next day. It was a challenge transporting all the necessary personnel and gear needed to dive on the suspected leaking pipeline. A total of five UTVs were used during this operation, which included two GLO UTVs and three contractor UTVs. Once the contract diver was underwater, it was discovered that part of a 4" pipeline, approximately ¼ mile off the beach in close proximity to the sheen sighting, had a 3" by 1" hole. Absorbent pads were inserted into the hole to minimize the impact.

The GLO Region 1 office has assisted the USCG with numerous additional trips to the leak site since January 14. The owner has not been identified and the fate of the pipeline is still undecided at this time.

## GLO Transitions

On March 23rd, Scott Gaudet was promoted to Regional Director of the La Porte, Region 2 Oil Spill Division Field Office. Scott has more than 25 years of oil spill response experience at the federal, state and private industry levels.

Congratulations to Al Oswald and Gray Powell on their recent promotion to Senior Response Officer. Senior Response Officers have to meet a time in service requirement; be qualified to operate and train other personnel on GLO response equipment; be subject matter experts on spill response, facility and vessel compliance, environmental rules and regulations; and pass a written test and a review board to advance. Al works in the Region 3, Corpus Christi office; Gray works in the Region 2, La Porte office.

Congratulations to Jesse Mayorga on his recent promotion to Advanced Response Officer. Jesse works in the Region 2, La Porte office. Also, Tony Belton completed all qualifications and was promoted to Qualified Response Officer.

In April, Region 1 Manager Ross Penton retired from the Oil Spill Program after more than 22 years of exemplary service. Ross is a consummate professional and will be missed by the Oil Spill program.

## Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Division Points of Contact

### Austin

P.O. Box 12873  
Austin, Texas  
78711-2873  
512.475.1575

### Port Arthur

2300 Highway 365, Ste. 340  
Nederland, Texas  
77627-6255  
409.727.7481

### La Porte

11811 North D Street  
La Porte, Texas  
77571-9135  
281.470.6597

### Corpus Christi

6300 Ocean Drive, Unit 5847  
Corpus Christi, Texas  
78412-5847  
361.825.3300

### Brownsville

2145 EMS Lane  
Brownsville, Texas  
78521-2666  
956.504.1417

### Port Lavaca

414 Travis Street  
Port Lavaca, Texas  
77979-2351  
361.552.8081

**Report oil spills**  
**800.832.8224**  
**24 hours**

The Responder is published by the Texas General Land Office.  
Questions and comments may be submitted to Angela Jarvis  
via email at [angela.jarvis@glo.texas.gov](mailto:angela.jarvis@glo.texas.gov)  
or by phone at 281.470.6597.

# Crestchem LLC Spill in Cedar Bayou

On April 19, Region 2 Response Officer Trey Trahan responded to an unknown sheen in Cedar Bayou that was reported by a tow boat captain in the area. Trahan contacted the USCG Sector Houston to coordinate utilizing boat TGLO 224 in response to this report and met USCG Petty Officers Metcalf, Gilbert and Hillard at Roseland Park to further investigate. A light sheen was observed in the bayou and the responders headed downstream to determine the extent of the spill. The first recoverable oil was observed in the HL&P cut and a sample was taken as part of the investigation.

The responders then patrolled back upstream on Cedar Bayou looking for the source of the oil. The responders found a large pocket of recoverable oil at the Cedar Bayou Towing dock; after investigating, this facility was ruled out as the source. The responders then received word that Baytown HAZMAT was on scene at Galveston Bay RV Park on Tri City Beach Road at the mouth of the HL&P cut. Their HAZMAT technician's analysis indicated that the material observed was kerosene. The USCG was already in the process of federalizing the spill and OMI Environmental Services was contracted for clean up, but a source still had not been identified.

GLO Response Officers continued Cedar Bayou boat patrols for the next couple of days to monitor the spill and attempt to identify the source. During these patrols there began to be less recoverable oil and more heavy sheen observed. On April 22, Response Officers Gray Powell and Jesse Mayorga helped the USCG locate an outfall associated with the potential source of the spill. At this time the manager for Crestchem LLC admitted he had discovered a spill at his facility on April 20, but he did not believe the material had reached the water. The oil spilled was from the process unit that uses off-road diesel as a feedstock. Based on the discovery of the path of discharge, the manager was requested to report this spill. At this time, Trahan issued a Letter of State Interest for the spill, and notified TCEQ of the spill.

On April 23, Crestchem LLC took over clean up operations from

the USCG and TCEQ was on scene to oversee clean up operations at the facility as well as address potential compliance issues and the GLO would handle the on-water cleanup. OMI Environmental Services estimated that approximately 6,000 gallons had to be recovered on the water. Once the majority of the clean up was complete, Trahan conducted an assessment of the impacted area with Steven Mitchell and Heather Biggs of TPWD Spills and Kills. TPWD will continue to monitor this site for the possible loss of marsh grass due to the spill.



Oil is observed along the western shoreline of the HL&P cut.



Oil skimming operations are conducted at Cedar Bayou Towing.

## A.X. Benavides Elementary Principal for a Day

On February 20, Raymond Oliveira, Manager of Oil Spill's Region 4 office, participated in Brownsville ISD's 23rd annual "Principal for a Day" at A.X. Benavides Elementary in Brownsville. The annual Principal for a Day event, created by BISD administration, is a very successful outreach program to promote awareness and understanding of the school district's many accomplishments. It demonstrates the community's commitment to ensuring a quality education for all students.

The event also provided an excellent opportunity for the GLO's Region 4 manager to meet all the school's teachers, administrators, staff and students. After leading the Pledge of Allegiance and participating in morning announcements, Oliveira toured the entire school with Principal Sherry Stout and was given the opportunity to present student of the week awards to each classroom in grades K-5. Oliveira then made a presentation in the school auditorium to all fifth-grade students and teachers about the GLO Oil Spill Division and the role the GLO plays in the community.

After completing the school activities, Oliveira attended a luncheon with Principal Stout where all 2015 Principal for a Day participants were honored by BISD's superintendent and school board. During the luncheon, each Principal for a Day was introduced and

presented with a proclamation by the area superintendents and school board members.

"Not only was it a great honor to serve as principal for a day and share our vision of how the GLO serves the state of Texas and local community," Oliveira said, "it was a great experience to see how hard the teachers, administrators, staff and students work on a daily basis, making A.X. Benavides Elementary one of the top-ranking grade schools in the district."



Raymond Oliveira, Manager of Oil Spill's Region 4 office, gives a presentation during BISD's 23rd annual Principal for a Day at A.X. Benavides Elementary in Brownsville.

# SCAT Training – Learning the Right Way to Clean

A group of 33 students was recently selected to spend three days in March learning both theory and hands-on applications of Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Techniques (SCAT) along Mustang Island. The class was presented through a partnership between the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Response and Restoration.

Following the NOAA established format, the SCAT training course creates a systematic and standardized method of measuring and evaluating oiled shoreline, as well as determining objectives for appropriate, cost effective and environmentally sound methods to mitigate spill damage. During this training, participants from the GLO, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and the U.S. Coast Guard heard from SCAT experts Jacqui Michele, of Research Planning Inc. (RPI); Paige Doelling, NOAA SSC; Steve Buschang, GLO SSC; and Paul Silva, of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. In-depth classroom discussion covered an intro to Environmental Sensitivity Index (ESI) atlases, SCAT processes and documentation methods, oil behavior in various shoreline types, establishing endpoints, and gaining a better knowledge of various methods to address spills, all while balancing the needs of the many competing interests affected in a spill incident.

Although the classroom sessions were long, they weren't without some added excitement, including a Jeopardy-style review section that brought out a remarkably strong competitive nature among the SCAT students. Participants also showed an inclination to remedy spill situations by a good in situ burn.

A field training exercise held along the shore of Redfish Bay was a big hit and gave the participants a chance to test their new skills in a simulated spill situation. SCAT students also visited recuperating sea turtles at the Animal Rehabilitation Keep (ARK) at UT Port Aransas Marine Science Institute.

"As a neophyte to the field of oil spill responding, my SCAT training experience was rewarding and educational," said Liana Lerma, who took the training. "The techniques I learned in and out of the field from such wonderful experts will be very instrumental when fulfilling my duties as a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Kills and Spills Teams responder."

Classes are offered to state and federal agencies as well as NGOs and industry as funding is made available.



SCAT students during a field training exercise along the shore of Redfish Bay.

## NOAA/NWS Rio Grande Valley Weather Festival 2015

Corey Mock and Mike Janskowski attended the recent NOAA/NWS Rio Grande Valley Weather Festival in Brownsville, where they showcased the Region 4 airboat. The event was fun, educational, and attended by more than 500 community members. The Region 4 office wanted to share the airboat with the community and discuss how instrumental it has been in spill response, as well as search and rescue missions after hurricanes have struck. Over the last 10 years, the GLO has assisted communities from South Texas to Louisiana devastated by hurricanes Katrina, Ike, Rita and Dolly.

Following is a list of goals and missions of the GLO before and after severe storms and natural disasters:

Emergency Management - Maintains communication with local emergency planning committees, local emergency management coordinators, and disaster district officials; maintains current contact information for elected officials in all coastal counties.

State Emergency Response/Natural Disaster Response - The Land Office is a member of the State Emergency Management Council, and provides support for two Emergency Support Functions (ESF), the State of Texas Emergency Support Plan and the National Response Framework. The GLO supports ESF-9 Search and Rescue, and ESF-10 Hazardous Materials and Oil Spill Response.

Hurricane season began June 1 so always remain vigilant and prepared, have your hurricane kits ready, and be safe! Thanks to NWS Brownsville for the vital role it plays in keeping our community safe and for its up-to-the-minute weather and storm updates.



Response Officer Corey Mock discusses emergency response at the NOAA/NWS Rio Grande Valley Weather Festival.

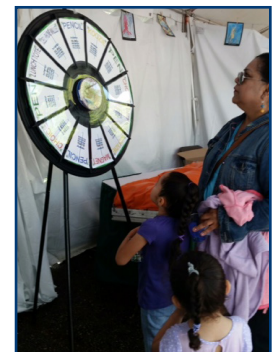
## GLO Outreach Extends Inland to Dallas at Earth Day Texas

Although landlocked, Dallas proved to be a good market for spreading the Oil Spill message during the annual Earth Day Texas event from April 24-26. Oil Spill team members Debbie Case, Gloria Maynard and D'Anne Stites, as well as GLO outreach staff member Scott Zacheus spent a stormy weekend reminding people of the importance of keeping Texas coastal waters free from oil and trash by following a few simple rules: Keep boats maintained, use proper fueling practices, don't litter and immediately report oil in the water. Attendees saw skimmer demos, took a chance spinning the Oil Spill prize wheel, and children took time to color a pristine water scene as they were reminded to take care of Texas natural resources.

Earth Day Texas is a free annual event that promotes environmental awareness and seeks to influence Texans to live, work and

play in a more green and environmentally friendly manner. Leaders in the corporate, academic, government and non-profit worlds unite to show Texans how green lifestyle choices, switching to eco-friendly products and better use of natural resources can lower their cost of living, improve their health, and help the environment.

The GLO has participated in Earth Day Texas for several years. Organizers estimate more than 70,000 people attended the event, making it one of the largest supported by the GLO.



This family patiently waits for the prize wheel to come to a stop.